(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The Government has allowed import of 10,000 MTs of natural rubber at nil duty in order to bridge the gap between demand and supply, besides permitting the import of rubber at normal duty against special import licences granted to Export Houses, Trading Houses, etc.

High prices of pulses and edible oils

93. SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that prices of pulses and edible oils in the country are very high and this is causing great hardship to weaker sections of society;

(b) whether Government propose to include these items in Public Distribution System;

(c) if so, the details of the proposal; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) The prices of pulses and edible oils are rising due to the gap between demand for and supply of these items. To augment their supplies in the market and containing their prices, in addition to taking measures for increasing their domestic production, these commodities have been placed under Open General Licence for imports. To mitigate the hardships of the poor, imported palmolein is being supplied through fair price shops under the Public Distribution System and cooperative stores at a price lower than the open market price. Pulses are also being supplied through the retail outlets of cooperative stores, Kendriya Bhandars and the State Supplies Corporations although this is not an item under the Public Distribution System.

(b) to (d) Imported edible Palmolein is already being allocated to States/UT. Governments by the Central Government for distribution through the PDS. These allocations are made to the States/UTs. subject to availability of stocks and demands received from them from time to time. During the year 1994-95, about 1.08 lakhs tonnes of RBD Palmolein was imported for distribution through the PDS and the same is expected to be distributed by the end of the current financial year.

In respect of pulses, however, in view of wide variations in consumer preferences for different varieties of pulses in different region of the country and the existing pattern of production, it is felt that contralined procurement of pulses by the Central Government agencies may not be feasible.

बीड़ी मजदूरों का कल्याण

*94. श्री सत्य प्रकाश मालवीय
श्री अनन्तराम जायसवाल

क्या श्रम मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) देश के विभिन्न राज्यों विशेषकर उत्तर प्रदेश, मध्य प्रदेश, बिहार और राजस्थान में बीड़ी मजदूरों की वर्तमान संख्या कितनी-कितनी है ;

(ख) मध्य प्रदेश और उत्तर प्रदेश में क्रमश: 1984 और 1990 में बीड़ी मजदूरों की संख्या कितनी-कितनी थी ;

(ग) क्या श्रम मंत्रालय से संबद्ध संसदीय समिति ने अपना प्रतिवेदन सरकार को प्रस्तुत कर दिया है ;

(घ) यदि हां, तो देशभर के मजदूरों के कल्याण के लिए इस समिति ने अपने प्रतिवेदन में क्या सुझाव दिए हैं; और

(ङ) सरकार उन पर क्या कार्रवाई करने पर विचार कर रही है ?

श्रम मंत्री (श्री पी० एस० संगमा) (क) से (ङ) उपलब्ध सूचना के अनुसार, विभिन्न राज्यों में बीड़ी कर्मकारों की